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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/831,915	05/25/2001	Thomas Daniel	208608US0PCT	2083

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EXAMINER

METZMAIER, DANIEL S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1712

DATE MAILED: 07/27/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/831,915

Applicant(s)

DANIEL ET AL.

Examiner

Daniel S. Metzmaier

Art Unit

1712

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 May 2005.
2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 and 18 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 and 10-18 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-7 and 10-18 are pending.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on May 9, 2005 has been entered.

Specification

2. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: the paragraph bridging pages 6 and 7 of the specification refers to figure 8 having elements (37), (39) and (40) in an apparatus set forth in EP-A-0 640 330 and not otherwise disclosed herein. Said disclosure describes the measure of the "gel layer permeability (GLP)".

Although said subject matter is NOT incorporated by reference, it is noted that the incorporation of essential material in the specification by reference to a foreign application or patent, or to a publication is improper.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

Art Unit: 1712

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

6. Claims 1-3, 6-7, 10-14, 16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Boschetti et al, US 5,075,371. Boschetti et al (examples) discloses the polymerization of an acrylamide with the addition of sodium silicate and optionally forming particulate gels in oil followed by separation, and drying. Boschetti et al (examples) discloses a number of sodium silicate, which inherently read on the alkali metal oxide to silica ratio claimed. Said materials are commercially available within said range. Boschetti et al (examples)

characterizes the gels as aqueous gels, which is deemed synonymous with the term hydrogel.

Boschetti et al (column 1) discloses the inorganic organic materials as chromatographic materials and would have been expected to have some absorbing properties to function as a chromatographic media. The concentration ranges of instant claim 2 clearly encompass calculated values disclosed in the Boschetti et al (examples) reference.

To the extent Boschetti et al differs from the claims in the specified alkali metal oxide to silica ratio claimed, said range encompasses commercially available sodium silicate solutions and would have been obvious as conventional sodium silicate materials for their availability. Boschetti et al (column 2, lines 15 et seq) employs acid in the Boschetti et al process prior to the addition of the sodium silicate and defines the pH. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to vary the alkali for their advantageous use as chromatographic materials.

7. Claims 4-5 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boschetti et al, US 5,075,371. Boschetti et al discloses the polymerization of an acrylamide with the addition of sodium silicate and optionally forming particulate gels in oil followed by separation, and drying as set forth in the preceding anticipation rejection.

Boschetti et al differs from claims 4 and 5 in the point of addition of the sodium silicate and the further combination of a neutralizing agent, i.e., alkali metal hydroxide or alkali metal carbonate.

Boschetti et al (examples) discloses the use of sodium hydroxide in the particle embodiment and teaches (column 2, lines 46 et seq) neutralization. Changes in the order of process steps has been held to be *prima facie* obvious. See MPEP 2144.04(C). Furthermore, the use of conventional neutralizing agents, i.e., sodium carbonate, is within the level of one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention for the advantage of buffering the system such as is employed in the Boschetti et al (example 7) reference.

Boschetti et al differs from claim 17 in the use of sodium silicate rather than potassium silicate claimed. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skilled in the art at the time of applicants' invention to employ potassium silicate as an obvious functional equivalent to the sodium silicate and their structural similarity.

8. Claims 1-4, 6-7, 10-16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Seiter et al, US 4,707,290. Seiter et al (example 1) discloses the combination of an aqueous acrylates and sodium silicates to form a granular absorbent. The polymer solution is in polymerized form and the addition of the silicate thereto. The characterization of the material as a hydrogel would have been inherent to the 40 % concentration of the polymer.

To the extent the polymer is not in a gel form, said limitation does not distinguish the product which is further dried and any increased aqueous solvent would have improved dispersibility of the silicate in the dried product. The product resulting from the process has not been shown to distinguish over the wet processing followed by drying

Art Unit: 1712

to form the absorbent granules. It would have been obvious to vary the water content of the polymer for the advantage of the polymers binder function and facilitate the granule formation on drying.

Response to Arguments


9. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-7 and 10-18 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Daniel S. Metzmaier whose telephone number is (571) 272-1089. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday from 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Randy Gulakowski, can be reached on (571) 272-1302. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Daniel S. Metzmaier
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1712

DSM